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RIDDELL MEMORIAL LECTURES

First Series

GENERAL SUBJECT

RELIGION AND THE THOUGHT OF TO-DAY

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BY

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THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION

Titles of Lectures

NOV. 28th. The study of Religion: problems and methods.

NOV. 29th. The debt of Modern Philosophy to the Christian Religion.

NOV. 30th. The problem of Religion in contemporary thought.

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I

THE STUDY OF RELIGION: ITS PROBLEMS AND METHODS

I COUNT it no small honour to have been invited to deliver the first series of Riddell Memorial Lectures in this University and City. The foundation of these Lectures is in itself an event of no little interest. It is one of many indications in the recent academic history of this country of a growing conviction among us that the subject of Religion is on the one hand a subject apart from the serious consideration of which the study of human life and of the world which is its stage must be gravely incomplete, and on the other hand a subject capable of being treated in a critical and scientific spirit without offence to the reasonable susceptibilities of those who hold with conviction and loyalty the tenets of any particular religious society. The establishment eight years ago by the munificence of a private benefactor of the chair which I myself hold at Oxford is another such indication; and so again is the organization of the Faculties of Theology which now exist in the modern Universities of London, Manchester, and Wales. In times past the student of Philosophy was frequently handicapped in his investigation of the history of human thought by unfamiliarity with the religious beliefs which have played so large a part in the formation of men's opinions concerning the general nature of reality; while the religious man was hampered in his intellectual development by reluctance to bring his religious experience into the open, as it were, and to relate it in his mind to those other parts of his experience which he shared not only with his own religious group, but with men of quite other religious convictions or of no religious convictions at all. For my own part,

I am convinced that such foundations as this of the Riddell Memorial Lectures are to be welcomed as tending to remove this handicap, this disability. They are, I venture to think, to be regarded as proofs of a greater mutual confidence in quarters formerly disposed to look with a certain anxious suspicion upon one another; a greater confidence in Reason on one side, and in Religion on the other; in the power of Reason to appreciate and to profit by the contribution made by religious experience to our knowledge of the universe in which our lot is cast; and in the capacity of Religion to justify at the bar of reason its claim to make to that knowledge a genuine and indispensable contribution.

It is, if you will allow me to say so, an especial pleasure to me to be, by the choice made of me by the Senate of the University of Durham to deliver these lectures, associated for the time being with Armstrong College. In an institution where the study of philosophy has been for so many years directed by four men whom I am proud to be able to call my friends, Mr. Harvey, Mr. Ferguson, Mr. Hoernlé, and my old pupil Mr. Loveday—and over which, when I first knew it, an old Oxford colleague of mine, Sir Henry Hadow, presided, and now a schoolfellow of mine worthily presides in the person of your present distinguished Principal—I cannot feel myself to be altogether a stranger. And there is yet another link with the intellectual life of this great city which I should not like on this occasion to leave unmentioned. I had the privilege of meeting here, ten years ago, under Professor Loveday's roof, that remarkable man, the late Dr. Merz. I have always felt that his great work on the *History of European Thought in the Nineteenth Century* was full of encouragement for those who are especially interested in insisting upon the importance in that history of the religious thought of the period. No one was better acquainted than Dr. Merz with the vast

extent and massive grandeur of the results accomplished by the natural sciences during that age of amazing progress in the knowledge of the physical universe and in the control of its resources, and with the revolution which has been thereby wrought in our whole outlook upon the world, and yet no one was less disposed to dismiss to the realm of illusion and misunderstanding the religious and theological movements which have taken place in Europe during the years that witnessed that great scientific achievement.

I regret that I had no personal knowledge of the late Sir John Buchanan-Riddell, in honour of whom these lectures have been founded; but I believe that in commemorating him thus his friends and neighbours have expressed their admiration of a life inspired by a high ideal of public service and illustrating in practice the principles of the religion which he professed—that religion the bearing whereon of contemporary developments of thought those appointed to deliver these lectures are specially instructed to consider and to emphasize.

In this, the first of my three lectures, I propose to offer to your consideration some observations of a general character on the Study of Religion, its problems and its methods.

A definition of Religion I shall not attempt to give. It would be, in my opinion, as idle to expect to make any one, by means of such an initial definition, understand what Religion is who does not already in some instances know what it is, as it would be to expect to teach a person by such a definition what Beauty is who does not already recognize beauty in some instances. I shall assume that the word Religion is not without meaning for my audience, and shall go on to suggest that the problems in the investigation of which the study of Religion engages us may be ranked under two heads according as they are *historical* or *philosophical*: concerned with the actual religious emotions, convictions, practices, and

institutions which have been recorded or may be observed as occurring in different places or at different times; or with the inferences to be drawn from the existence of these facts as to the ultimate nature of the world which has produced them, and of which they at any rate claim to express or reveal the fundamental character. It is no doubt true that a judgement which shall command general acceptance upon the testimony thus borne to the ultimate nature of Reality cannot well be made apart from an induction of instances gathered over an extensive field; as also that the value attributed to this testimony must profoundly affect our attitude towards the facts alleged in the course of this induction. We cannot, that is to say, keep what I have called the *historical* and what I have called the *philosophical* problems permanently apart; but provisionally we may no doubt concentrate our attention upon the historical study of religious phenomena, reserving for the time our decision as to the significance to be assigned to them in our interpretation of human experience as a whole.

The historical study of religious phenomena may in its turn be subdivided according as they are exhibited by *individuals* or by *groups*. But here, too, we must, if we are to avoid certain mistakes into which even some eminent writers upon this subject have been known to fall, be careful not to isolate either of these subdivisions of the study from the other. We must bear in mind the profound lesson which was taught us once for all long ago by Plato in his *Republic* that it is in the 'large letters' of the social institutions wherein the soul of man has found expression that we shall do well to begin our reading of what that soul itself contains. It is true that since the days of Plato the European mind has taken a step forward—taken it under the influence of Christianity and of the store set by that religion upon every individual soul—in the creation of a whole litera-

ture of individual introspection to which classical antiquity can present no parallel. If we confine ourselves for the moment to Religion, we find that even by so great a religious teacher as Plato himself—notwithstanding that the devotion of his great master Socrates from youth to age to his lonely religious vocation, and the martyrdom to which it led him at last, had left an indelible impression upon the mind of Socrates' most illustrious disciple—even by Plato Religion is often represented as pre-eminently a social or even a political affair, in which least of all a man could be supposed to have an interest distinct from that of the State whereof he was a citizen. Such a conception is as far as possible removed from that expressed in the assertion—so frequently heard and acted upon among ourselves—that Religion is a man's private concern 'between himself and his Maker', or again in the description of Religion thrown out in a recent book by Professor Whitehead, 'Religion is what the individual does with his own solitariness' (*Religion in the Making*, p. 16). Yet, although we may recognize that Religion tends to become, with the progress of civilization, more and more a function of the individual soul, and may find evidence to support the view that even among primitive men it is never so merely a social (as contrasted with an individual) function as the school of Durkheim, for instance, maintains that it is—it still remains true that it is from religious institutions (which of course in modern Europe are distinct from political, in a way in which in ancient Greece and Rome they were not) that the religion of the normal believer and worshipper must primarily be gathered. This religion of the ordinary religious man is indeed apt to be unduly overlooked when the investigator of what is called the 'psychology of religion' neglects the testimony of 'common prayer', public worship, and doctrinal definition, and pays a disproportionate amount of attention on the one hand to

exceptional or even extravagant manifestations of religion by individuals of rare and peculiar temperament, and on the other to the records of religious experiences supplied by persons brought up in religious bodies which encourage the open confession of such experiences, forgetting the while the probably more numerous members of communities of a different type, in which the whole tendency of tradition is in favour of reticence in this respect. But the danger of forgetting Plato's lesson which besets what is called the Psychology of Religion—I prefer to call it the history of religion in individuals—is balanced by the opposite danger of studying Religion merely from without—of attending to its external manifestations, the ceremonies, gestures, and phraseology associated with it, and supposing that the emotions, the convictions, the principles of conduct, which constitute the actual religious life of individual souls, are to be interpreted by the archaeology of these outward symbols, rather than the present significance of these symbols themselves sought in the emotions, convictions, principles which they are now used to express.

May I illustrate what is in my mind by a personal reminiscence? I remember, now a good many years ago, meeting a Japanese gentleman who had, as a member of the staff of his Embassy in London, attended the consecration of a bishop for Korea in St. Paul's Cathedral by the Archbishop of Canterbury who has just resigned his office—Dr. Randall Davidson. He went with all the more interest that he had been much impressed by the force and weight of a speech which he had heard the Archbishop make in the House of Lords. He was struck by the similarity of the ritual, of the dress, and of the movements of the officiating clergy to what he had seen in the Buddhist temples of his own country. 'Then', he commented, 'I knew that Religion was'—I expected him to say: 'much the

same everywhere', or something of that sort—but what he did say was: 'that Religion was *nonsense*'.

Now this remark does but put with unusual trenchancy a point of view which is by no means uncommon. But, although not an uncommon, it is surely very doubtful whether it is a reasonable point of view. Even supposing that the mutual resemblance of Christianity and Buddhism were really in other respects as close as this likeness in their rituals suggested to the Japanese gentleman whom I have quoted, why should the inference from this resemblance be that Religion is all nonsense? Would the inference drawn by an observer of resemblances or correspondences between the conventions of, say, Chinese and European painting or of the drama in Europe and in India, be that painting or drama was all nonsense? Surely not. The sounder conclusion would, I take it, in both instances be either that there was borrowing on the one side or the other—or else that a fundamental identity in human nature was manifesting itself in similar ways under like conditions, even where the context was in many respects very widely different.

But even the conclusion which I had expected to hear my Japanese acquaintance draw from the external similarity of a Christian to a Buddhist religious ceremony—that Religion is much the same in all countries, however diverse the creeds professed—would really have been unjustified. It would have been drawn on the assumption that the resemblance or even the identity in the external forms of two social transactions implies identity or resemblance in their intellectual or ethical content. But plainly this is not true. Externally there might be very little to distinguish—say to the observation of one unacquainted with the language in which the proceedings were conducted—a meeting of the Faculty of Medicine in some University from a meeting of the authorities of some Church of Christian

Scientists; they might wear clothes of the same sort, place one of their number in the chair, have minutes read and signed, resolutions moved and seconded and voted on, and so forth; but it would by no means follow that the differences between their respective theories of the nature of disease were unimportant—still less that all theories on this subject were alike nonsense.

It may seem an easy matter to dispose of what I may call the fallacy of outward resemblance in the extreme form in which the Japanese gentleman of whom I was speaking presented it. But it underlies the very common opinion that to trace the history of some religious ceremony or phrase back to a primitive custom or way of speaking which belonged to a barbarous state of society and, it may be, implied some obsolete belief which no one would now regard as tenable, entitles one to regard the ceremony or phrase in its present context as a mere ' survival ', altogether destitute of real value to any modern man except the archaeologist whose curiosity is satisfied by the discovery of its origin. Yet, should it be shown that the fiddle bow is an adaptation to a new purpose of the archer's weapon, this would not make it an adequate account of the interpretation of a great musical composition by a great violinist that it is a survival of a fashion of primitive warfare. Nor is it much more reasonable, because one may be able to trace features in the ritual and liturgy of the higher religions to a savage original, to regard the study of Religion as no more than a branch of Anthropology—in that strange conventional sense of this word according to which it denotes the science not (as one might naturally expect) of humanity in general but only of man in the earlier and lower stages of his cultural development—while one ignores the intrinsic value and the high significance of that which the ritual or liturgy wherein these features have ' survived ' are now adapted to symbolize and express.

The philosophical problems connected with the study of Religion may be said, like the historical, to fall under two heads, according as they are concerned with examining the claim that in Religion we have genuine revelation of features of Reality which are only to be known through religious experience; or with the relation of the religious experience to other departments of our experience, such as the economic, the political, the aesthetic, the scientific, or the moral. My hearers will certainly not expect me on this occasion to enter upon a discussion of these problems; they will readily understand that in the hour now at my disposal I cannot at the most do more than indicate their nature, and offer a few observations upon some of them, the dogmatic style of which observations I will beg you to ascribe to the exigencies of time and not to blindness or indifference on my part to difficulties which may well occur to your minds, but which I may seem to be ignoring.

Thus I will not conceal my view that whatever light methods of psycho-analysis and the investigations of psychotherapists generally may be throwing—and I by no means deny that they have already thrown much light—upon the manner in which an individual human mind grows or develops, they no more disprove the claim made for Religion that we have in it a genuine experience of a reality independent of the process whereby it is experienced than they disprove the like claim made for our ordinary social intercourse to be a commerce with personalities other than and equally real with our own. I will also affirm with some confidence that the constant recurrence of doubt concerning the reality of its object, which unquestionably haunts Religion as it does not haunt other forms of human experience, and the imperative need of an active faith in and of communion with its object if it is to be kept alive, are to be understood according to the analogy of our acquaintance with other human beings. For there

any real mutual knowledge can only be had and maintained if one ' keeps in touch ', as we say, with one's friend by the active exercise of sympathetic interest and by constant interchange of thought and feeling.

With respect to the other set of philosophical problems connected with the study of Religion to which I have referred, I will in the same dogmatic fashion remark that any attempt to *identify* Religion with some other form of human experience—with knowledge, with aesthetic appreciation, with the consciousness of moral obligation—it will be found impossible to carry through. I will state my conviction that Religion possesses a distinctive character of its own, which does not admit of definition in terms of something else, but is recognizable by everybody—or almost everybody—in particular instances; though not, of course, by everybody in the *same* particular instances. Again I hold that, while Religion coincides with Philosophy—which indeed is in history found as a rule springing up in a soil prepared by Religion—in its concern not with any special part of the Reality by which we are confronted, but with that Reality as a whole, or with that whereon we divine it as a whole to depend; yet it differs from Philosophy in concerning itself therewith, not as something to be disinterestedly studied and understood, but rather as something with which the whole self of each one of us is or can be brought into what we can only intelligibly describe as a *personal* relation. All these positions I should be ready on another occasion to defend to the best of my ability; but for the moment I can but thus briefly indicate them.

Such then are the problems in the consideration of which the study of Religion engages us. What, we have next to ask, are the methods to be employed in dealing with them?

Whatever be the right method by which to attempt the solution of historical problems in general, that, it

is scarcely necessary to say, is the right method to use in the case of the particular historical problems which are raised by the study of Religion. There is the same need of assiduous industry in the collection of relevant facts; the same need of an exercise of sympathetic imagination in reconstructing a past situation; I would add that there is here need also of a conviction (such as we often take for granted in other departments of learning) of the *reality* of the thing the history whereof we are tracing. This remark requires some explanation and perhaps some defence.

Would any one, we may perhaps begin by asking, expect a valuable history of music to be written by a person to whom music was no more than Dr. Johnson is reported to have said that it was to him—a noise which gave him no new ideas and prevented him from enjoying those which he already had? Would not one rather look for such a work from one to whom the enjoyment of music is a serious and significant experience?

It may be objected that it is quite possible to write the history of a delusion; and that such a history might be a contribution of great importance to the science of the human mind. But if a person who should begin to write a history of Religion on the assumption that he was dealing with a particular form of response by the human spirit to a genuine aspect of the real world in which it finds itself placed, however liable to perversion through misunderstanding, were in the course of his work to become convinced that Religion was in fact an illusion, this would surely involve a complete recasting of the whole; the very thing whose history he was writing would be other than that with which he had at first supposed himself to be concerned. It may be added that, just as it has been noted that where there exists, as often in India, a deeply rooted belief that the whole series of temporal events is a mere masquerade in which one eternal and unchanging Actor presents

himself in various disguises, which the wise man seeks to penetrate in order to discover the same reality lurking under each, there we do not find a truly historical literature arising; so the study of Religion as a distinct branch of investigation, ranking with such other studies as those of Nature, of Art, of Society, can hardly flourish where there is not presupposed what may be called the *autonomy* of Religion as a form of spiritual life or experience. But the question of this presupposition itself is, as we saw, one of the *philosophical* problems connected with the study of Religion.

As with History, so also with Philosophy. The method of the Philosophy of Religion must be in principle the same as that of Philosophy everywhere; the method of thinking out the necessary implications of experience, without restriction to any special department thereof, and untrammelled by any check imposed from without upon our freedom to follow the argument, in Plato's famous phrase, whithersoever like a breeze it may carry us. But Philosophy never begins *in vacuo*; it must have an experience to set to work upon; and while, as is implied in what I have just said, there is no kind or form of experience which may not serve as grist to Philosophy's mill, it has also, as a matter of historical fact, been the religious experience that has shown itself most apt to arouse the impulse to treat it philosophically. This is because it is in Religion that man commonly first comes to envisage himself and all that he is or does, all that happens to him or surrounds him, as belonging to an all-comprehending Whole, outside of and beyond which there is nothing at all; and it is just this envisagement of ourselves as members of such a Whole, become conscious and made the object of explicit reflection, which is the characteristic feature of what we call Philosophy.

I have now spoken of the problems of the History of Religion, and have included among these those of

the Psychology of Religion, as being in fact those of the History of Religion in individuals rather than in groups; I have spoken also of the Philosophy of Religion. But I have said nothing of any Science of Religion distinct or distinguishable from these. The omission was deliberate, but perhaps it should be explained, and some words added concerning the use of the word 'Science' in this connexion. No doubt 'science' by its etymology means no more than 'knowledge'; and any effort to *know* or to put ourselves in the way of *knowing* anything, which is inspired by the disinterested desire of knowledge and guided by no other principles than such as have been found to be successful in assisting us to attain it, we may call, in a wide but quite legitimate sense, 'scientific'. In this sense the investigation of the historical and philosophical problems connected with Religion I should not hesitate to describe as genuinely scientific. But in what is now a common way of speaking—though not by any means a long-established one, being barely a century old—we mean by 'science' *natural* science and by 'scientific' what can be held to fall within the domain of 'science' in this restricted significance of the word. Now sometimes what is harmless enough as a mere well-understood abbreviation may have mischievous consequences if it be assumed to carry with it the implication that whatever is not 'scientific' in this special sense is therefore not 'science' in the wider sense—not knowledge of reality at all.

Without going further into this matter than either the time or the subject allotted to me would allow, I will content myself with pointing out a real distinction between what we ordinarily call 'Science' and History, which, in the interests of clearness of thought, should always be borne in mind. *History* is always concerned primarily with the concrete individual, *Science* with the general or abstract law. No doubt Science must start

with facts about concrete individuals, and historical testimony is of importance to it, so far as it is requisite to guarantee the accuracy of an observation or experiment; but what Science does with the observation or experiment is to *generalize* it, to drop out of sight its historical individuality, and to treat it as an instance of some law. On the other hand, History cannot dispense with generalization; yet uses it only as a means to the discovery of what is uniquely individual. Now the study of Religion is, I think, concerned pre-eminently with concrete historical individual facts and relations; and so does *not* belong to the domain of Science in the narrower sense; but either to that of History, or else to that of Philosophy, in which we attempt what Plato calls a 'survey of all time and of all existence'. In Philosophy we neglect neither the incommunicable individuality which we come to know in our consciousness of our own selves and attribute to all that is truly 'substantial' or real on its own account; nor yet the general laws, in reliance on which we are able to make ourselves at home in the world of objects which is our environment, the stage on which our life is set and in which it seems to be rooted. The study of Religion therefore is not, I think, correctly to be described as a 'Science' in the narrower sense of that word; but this does not mean that, profiting by those lessons of uncompromising devotion to truth and of unremitting exactitude in the record of experience and in the drawing of inferences which it can learn so well from the example of Natural Science, it may become truly 'scientific' in the wider sense in which the word may be applied not to Natural Science only but to History and Philosophy also.

There is a celebrated saying of Renan's, in the Introduction to his *Vie de Jésus*, that to write the history of a religion it is necessary in the first place to have believed it, and in the second to believe it no longer *d'une*

manière absolue. This is, I think, true if we interpret the believing it *d'une manière absolue* to mean believing it in such a fashion as to exclude all consideration of what does not belong to *that* religion as being merely false, and to regard all criticism of it as merely hostile and profane. I am now speaking, not (as hitherto) of Religion in general, but of *a* religion. Religion, however, always exists as *a* religion; and religious experience, without which, as we saw, we can have no Philosophy of Religion, is only to be had through faith in *some* religion; and this again, normally at any rate, is only acquired through membership or, if ever otherwise acquired, only able to express itself through membership in some religious society; whether this be the tribe or nation into which we were born, envisaged in its relations to the God or gods whom it worships, or a community exclusively concerned with such relations—a community, that is, such as we are accustomed to call a *church*. We have here, it is to be observed, a close analogy with *political* experience. That can only be acquired through membership in some political society; and political societies, like religious (and sometimes, as I have hinted above, societies may be political and religious at once), differ profoundly from one another in the principles which determine their organization and their conduct. Yet we always recognize the possibility of attaining, through political experience gained in one society, to a comprehension of a different political experience, gained in a different society, distinguishing by means of a comparison and contrast of the two what is like in them from what is unlike, what is common to both from what is peculiar to each, what supplements in one that which is lacking in the other from that which is, to borrow a biological term, homologous with something in the other, or (on the other hand) is incompatible with some essential factor in the structure of the other.

It is true that the possibility of continuing to believe

one religion, yet not *d'une manière absolue*, so as to exclude that *comparison of religions* which makes up a large part of the study of Religion, and serves as a means whereby the experience gathered in many religions is made available for the purpose of a philosophical investigation of Religion in general—this possibility implies a conviction which has not been entertained by the exponents of every religion. I mean the conviction of the capacity of a particular religion, either by assimilation and appropriation of the content of other religions or by replacing this by something of the same kind which will perform the same function better, to become the *universal* religion, which, though not perhaps in its primary form, yet in its eventual development, may be believed by its historian *d'une manière absolue*. Such a conviction may be and has been entertained by Christians in respect of the Christian Religion, the special relations of which to other departments of spiritual culture the Riddell Lecturer is expressly instructed to consider. My next lecture will be devoted to a subject which will illustrate that capacity—the debt of modern Philosophy to the Christian Religion.

THE DEBT OF MODERN PHILOSOPHY TO THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION

I CALLED attention in my previous lecture to the fact that it is with reflection upon religious experience that Philosophy, which is essentially reflection upon experience, most often begins. It is, indeed, for this reason that Philosophy so often appears, both in the history of nations and churches and also in the life of individuals, as a rival and enemy of Religion. It is in Religion that man first becomes aware of himself as in the presence of a Power, potentially infinite, which is the background of his whole life and with which it concerns him to come to an understanding; if possible, to establish relations of friendship and confidence with it, or at least to put himself right with it by acts of propitiation and homage. Thus Religion always implies some kind of theory of the nature of things, and the formation of such a theory is already a beginning of Philosophy; while, as men's experience widens, and they come to revise their first notions of the universe of which they form a part, their later speculations are found to be incompatible with earlier ones, which have yet by their association with Religion acquired a sanctity in the eyes of less venturous people; nay even, it may be, in the eyes of the very thinkers who have nevertheless found them inadequate; so that criticism of them comes to be suspected of impiety. But I do not now propose to pursue further the examination of this connexion between Religion and Philosophy as a feature common to the experience of humanity in general, but merely to suggest that in view of it one would antecedently expect the philosophy of modern Europe to be especially indebted to the Christian religion. For the ancestors of the European peoples of to-day passed in the ages following the collapse of the

Roman Empire through a period of development in which—whether they were the degenerate inheritors of the tradition of the classical culture, or barbarian invaders from the north with as yet but little tincture of any kind of civilization—they received at the hands of the authoritative exponents of Christianity a world-scheme which served them as a starting-point for all the subsequent reflection wherein the modern philosophy of Europe (and of America) took its rise.

In speaking thus of the Christian religion, I am of course speaking of it as our ancestors—the ancestors of the modern Europeans—received it. I am not concerned to discuss which features in it were due to the original Gospel of its Founder, which to the interpretation placed upon that Gospel by his disciples and their followers, which to the long continued process of mutual accommodation between the new spiritual impulse imparted by its preachers and the intellectual and social traditions of the Graeco-Roman world in which the Christian Church had gradually during the first five centuries or so of our era been making itself at home. Declining any such analysis into its constituent factors of the historical Christian religion in which the civilization of modern Europe was cradled, I shall attempt to enumerate briefly certain outstanding doctrines of this faith, the effect whereof, in moulding the speculative thought which that civilization has produced, may be traced in the history of European philosophy from the great outburst of intellectual activity in the twelfth century associated with the names of Anselm and Abelard down to the present age.

In the first place Christianity, as the offspring of Judaism, was fundamentally *monotheistic*. For it there was and could be but one God. Thus the philosophy which arose within its bosom started with the presupposition of an ultimate unity, to which any irreducible plurality of origins or any dualism of good and evil

principles, warring with one another on equal terms and without an assurance of victory to either side, must be repugnant. Secondly, it affirmed an absolutely unique and final revelation of this one God in the person of its Founder; a revelation granted, according to the phrase of St. Paul, 'in the fulness of the time'; foretold by prophets ' since the world began ', and followed by a dispensation culminating in his return as Judge to bring to a close the history of man and of the world that had been the stage of the majestic drama which began at the creation and of which the Incarnation was the central crisis. The bequest of this doctrine to European thought is the conception—strange both to India and to Greece, but profoundly influential in the West—of a single historic process, embracing all humanity and embodying (to borrow a well-known expression of Tennyson's) 'an increasing purpose'. Moreover the same doctrine, recognizing as it does in an actual historical personage not merely the manifestation—not even *the* manifestation for one particular age or cycle—but the one unrepeatable Incarnation of the divine nature, so that this same historical personage Jesus Christ is represented as standing in an absolutely unique relation to God—this doctrine thrust into the foreground the idea of Personality, which in the classical period was so little prominent that it is impossible to find an exact equivalent of the word in the literature of Greek philosophy, but which has in modern times not only exercised the wits of speculative men, but has served as an inspiration to social, political, and educational as well as to religious reformers.

Again, the character ascribed in the records of his life to the Person thus acknowledged by Christians as the ' image ' or ' portrait of the invisible God ' presented a distinctive moral ideal, which has served as the basis of ethical reflection in Europe. Although Stoicism, which supplied the early Christian thinkers with

a systematic framework for their ethical convictions, just as Platonism did for their metaphysical, had a profounder influence in moulding the principles of conduct traditional in Christendom than is always adequately recognized, it did not suppress those characteristics of Christianity which distinguish its moral temper from that of the school of Zeno, Chrysippus, and Seneca; though (as Zeller, the historian of Greek philosophy, has pointed out) the spirit of the last-named writer, who became the principal channel through which Stoicism reached medieval and modern Europe, had closer affinities with that of the new religion whose rise coincided with his lifetime than had the spirit of his Greek masters—a fact which rendered possible the very ancient legend of a correspondence between him and his contemporary the apostle Paul. The traits which are characteristic of Christianity in contrast with Stoicism are humility, pitifulness, an attitude towards sin at once more serious and more merciful, the exaltation of love to God and man as the supreme law of life. These are all rooted in the picture of Jesus which is set before us in the New Testament. It was thus not without excuse that in the last generation Nietzsche—even if he overlooked in his polemic against it (as I think that he did) certain aspects of Christian morality, which can themselves claim the sanction of Christ's example—charged Christianity with the introduction of those valuations which he aimed at reversing in favour of what he reckoned as a nobler and more virile estimate of what is desirable in human behaviour.

Once more. If to the place assigned in the Christian religion to the Person of Christ we may trace the importance in modern European philosophy of the problem of Personality, we may remark that the doctrines of that religion concerning the Trinity in the Godhead and the Atonement made by Christ for the sins of men—

doctrines closely linked with its lofty estimate of its Founder—have witnessed at the same time to the transcendence of individual personality in the life of mutual love which the former doctrine presented as constituting the very essence of God; and to the solidarity of human nature in all the persons who participate in it which is emphasized by the latter, with its affirmation of the taking away by the obedience of the 'second Adam' of the sin, the penalties whereof the disobedience of the first Adam had entailed upon his posterity. The traditional statements of these portions of the Christian creed might often invite criticism from those who took the freedom to offer it; but their implications directly suggested philosophical speculations of a kind which served to balance those other lines of thought —themselves, as we have already seen, promoted by the emphasis laid by Christianity upon individual personality —which might tend to neglect of the *universal* or common nature exhibited by all persons, though by each person in a peculiar and individual fashion of his own.

There is ever, where Philosophy is a living interest, a tension between opposite stresses; the one laid upon the *universal* element in Reality, the intelligible natures which are found exemplified indeed in individual instances, but which, as objects of our understanding, are not bound up with any particular individual thing or event or person; while the correlative stress is laid upon the *individual* element, which exists as every one of ourselves is conscious to himself of existing—not indeed independently of anything else (for none of us has made himself, or could continue for a moment in existence if isolated from the world out of which we came and which sustains us in being)—yet, in a sense, *on our own account*, possessing characters, attributes, qualities, and not existing in the way proper to qualities, attributes, and characters, as *belonging to something else*. In the Middle Ages the former stress was distinguished

from its opposite by the name of Realism, the latter by that of Nominalism. But the two are always present in Philosophy, and either may be pushed to an extreme; so that the individuality even of a human person may be called (as by the late Mr. Bosanquet) no more than a ' quasi-individuality ', the only true Individual being the all-comprehending Reality of which we are but partial and transient appearances; or, conversely, the world may be envisaged as a multitude of individual beings, each of which abides ' in its hermit-cell apart ', if not as, in Leibnitz's celebrated phrase, ' monads without windows', yet at least as refusing to each other permission to pass beyond their thresholds; while everything that binds them together in one, from gravitation up to love, is regarded as at the most an activity directed by one upon another which yet leaves unpenetrated the inner being of that other.

In either of these two presentations of the nature of Reality, injustice is done to one or other of the two correlative or polar aspects thereof, contrasted and inseparable, which we may call the ' universal ' and the ' individual ', the ' what ' and the ' that ', the ' essence ' and the ' existence '. Now when European philosophy has been tempted—and the temptation must continually recur—to such one-sidedness, the traditional theology of Christendom has ever redressed the balance by insistence alternately upon the doctrine of the supreme value of each human soul in the sight of God, with its corollaries of particular providence and individual immortality, and upon the doctrines of the Trinity, with its affirmation of the mutual immanence of the divine Persons, and of the Atonement, which presupposes that moral obligations and responsibilities can really be common to many individuals in virtue of their racial solidarity. To establish the truth of this assertion it would of course be necessary to attempt the presentation of the history of modern philosophy with a fullness of

detail which, even were it within my competence, would assuredly take far more time than is now at my disposal. But any student of that history must, I think, recognize that, not merely in the medieval period, when a general recognition of Christianity as revealed truth made it natural to confront any speculation which might be put forward with the question of its consistency with some part of the dogmatic teaching of the Church, but also in more recent times, although by what is probably a majority of those interested in philosophical discussion the authority of that teaching is no longer admitted at all, yet a religious experience gained in a Christian environment has been at least among the principal influences determining reaction against movements in philosophy which are suspected of being unable to do justice to the facts of that experience. I will ask you to consider for a few minutes, as an illustration of this statement, some incidents in the history of philosophy in our own country during the last half century.

It is obvious that the philosophy which was in vogue in England in the middle of the nineteenth century was one of what we may call, using the medieval phraseology, the *nominalistic* type. In every region of thought it insisted on the primacy of the isolated fact, on the secondary character of the *universal*, of that which the facts have in common, which binds them together into an intelligible system. Reasoning for Mill is 'from particulars to particulars'; in knowledge there is no element which cannot be resolved into separate experiences obtained by means of the senses. So in the sphere of conduct, in the last resort, man is shut up to the choice of that course of action which promises the larger sum of pleasant sensations; the community exists merely for the sake of the individual, and its interest can only be preferred to any individual's on the ground that it is the interest of a greater number of like individuals.

There can be no doubt that, however weighty were

the other objections brought by Green and other leaders of the idealistic revolt against the empirical school of thought, none were so influential in attracting a following among a public little affected by the controversies of academic lecture-rooms as those which were based upon the inadequacy of the principles of the then fashionable philosophy to justify profound religious convictions which Christianity had implanted in the hearts of men and women trained under its influence. These were dissatisfied with a teaching which left their souls no more than tablets whereon material things inscribed a record of their movements, their lives no more than the inevitable result of the interplay of conflicting desires for pleasure under the conditions imposed by our material environment. The new idealism (like Malvolio) thought nobly of the soul; more nobly at least than the empiricism which it assailed; and insisted that, were the mind of man such as it was represented by that empiricism, it would be incapable, not only of religion, but of genuine morality and of artistic creation; nay even of that very natural science which was generally supposed to sanction the derivation of knowledge from sensations alone. This contention gave it an appeal to those who had felt that the current doctrines left no room for the religious faith which was to them the most precious thing in life; and that appeal was a factor of no trifling importance in its eventual success.

But the idealism of Green and of those whose minds were moving in the same direction as his, although it was welcomed and justly welcomed as a philosophy which was not out of accord with religious experience, soon aroused doubts of its capacity of doing justice to personality, whether in man or in God. Notable expression was given to these doubts by Professor Andrew Seth, as he then was—Professor Pringle-Pattison, as we know him to-day. Here also the

Christian religion, which is distinguished from the great religions of the farther East by the value which it assigns to Personality, unquestionably inspired much salutary criticism of philosophical doctrines, the true tendency of which had not yet fully disclosed itself. The way of thinking which went by the name of Personal Idealism affords an example of this. And although, when the pendulum had swung farther in the other direction with the advent of the 'realism' which, in very various forms, was maintained by many English-speaking teachers of philosophy during the first quarter of the present century, some of the most conspicuous representatives of that tendency were no doubt wholly out of sympathy with the demands of religion in general and of Christianity in particular, yet the whole movement derived strength from the fact that, in its insistence on the point that the very notion of *knowledge* implies the independence of its object upon the activity wherein or whereby it is known, it was returning to the ancient position which had been assumed by the great medieval Schoolmen, whose philosophy had been canonized by the Roman Catholic Church and had profoundly influenced the whole theology of Western Christendom.

To those who are not familiar with the recent history of philosophical thought in this country and in America, I fear that this dry and compressed account of a controversy which has, more than any other, engaged the energies of philosophical disputants during the period concerned will be unintelligible. But to those who are familiar with that history it may be sufficient to indicate the part which the Christian religion has played in calling attention now to this and now to that aspect of experience, to which current speculation was at the time doing less than justice.

But if, leaving this narrower field, we ask ourselves wherein what we call *modern* philosophy is distinguished from *ancient*, we shall, I think, have little difficulty in

convincing ourselves that the main points of difference are intimately connected with those features of the Christian religion which were foreign to the spiritual tradition of that classical world wherein European philosophy took its rise.

Modern philosophy is commonly reckoned to begin with Descartes' systematic doubt or questioning of all that he had been accustomed to believe till he had reached a bedrock of certainty, a truth which could not be called in question, in the conviction of the reality of *himself*, the questioner and doubter—*Cogito ergo sum*. The ancients had been content to start with an objective reality, in the apprehension whereof knowledge consisted, a reality normally other than the mind that knows it; a point of view from which *self-knowledge* is bound to appear as something paradoxical, raising the question what that *self* is, which must, because it is known, be *other* than the self that knows it, although it is also recognized to be the *same* with it. In modern philosophy, on the other hand, *self-knowledge* has been since Descartes more often regarded as the fundamental and typical knowledge, so that it is even made a question whether one *can* know anything wholly other than oneself, anything which is not somehow brought within that self the knowledge whereof is the root and principle of all knowledge. Now the passage from what may be called the *objective* attitude characteristic of classical antiquity to the *subjective* attitude which has been so prominent in the last three hundred years presupposes the habit of self-examination which was fostered by Christianity, with its emphasis on a personal relation between the individual soul and God, upon which hung the immortal destiny of the former. It is no accident that the *Confessions* of Augustine should be —unless we reckon the *Meditations* of Marcus Aurelius —the first document of the highest rank in an introspective literature of which antiquity prior to the Christian

era affords no example, but in which some of the most representative modern minds have found expression, and that the same great thinker should have anticipated in principle the *Cogito ergo sum* of Descartes. Whether Descartes himself, who professed himself to have been unconscious in propounding that statement of any obligation to Augustine, was really as independent of his illustrious predecessor as he persuaded himself that he was, or had in fact once been acquainted with Augustine's reflections on the nature of certainty and then forgotten them, it remains true that in the great French thinker's *Meditations* there comes as it were to the surface of European thought a current which had long been mingling its waters with those derived from the fountains of Greek philosophy, a current which had its springs in the soil of Christian religious experience.

There is, however, contained in the famous saying *Cogito ergo sum* an ambiguity, in virtue of which the philosophy which takes its start thence has a double development. Who (so one may perhaps try to state this ambiguity briefly) is this *I* whose activity in thinking is said to guarantee his existence? From one point of view no doubt the answer is *René Descartes*. It is he that is speaking, and it is surely only his existence that *his* thinking can be supposed to guarantee. But it is equally certain that this thinking of his proves by itself the truth of nothing about him but that he is here and now thinking, and exists in so far as he does so. It is also clear that any other man's existence is equally guaranteed by *his* own thinking, and that nothing in the argument turns upon anything which we should have to read a biography of Descartes in order to discover. Further, as we pursue Descartes' reasonings in his *Meditations*, we find that this certainty of his own existence is said to involve the certainty of *God's*; because the idea of God, of an infinitely perfect Being, is present in his mind, while yet, by the very light of that

idea, he knows himself, the subject of his biography, to be finite and imperfect; and so, since he could not produce from himself a conception of which nothing in himself affords a pattern, there must be bound up with his very being the knowledge of that whereon he depends. Thus the *self*, the reality of which he cannot question, turns out to be, from this point of view, first *any* man's self, and then *God's* self immanent in all the finite selves which find their completion and perfection only in him.

This ambiguity in the fundamental principle of the father of modern philosophy works itself out in the clash which we find in the discussions of his successors between the idealism which ascribes ultimate reality to a multitude of beings whose inner being is as mutually exclusive and incommunicable as that of two human persons seems to be—and the idealism which on the other hand ascribes ultimate reality to a spiritual unity manifested in all things and persons, a unity of which such personalities as our own are but fragments, but which nevertheless attains to its highest and least inadequate expression in the social intercourse of persons such as we are, or rather as we ought to be. It is not my present task to attempt either to decide between or to reconcile these opposed theories, but only to point out that the contrast between them reflects a contrast between different aspects of the Christian faith, each of which is thus shown to be profoundly suggestive to the philosopher.

On the one hand, in no other religious system is the individual person made of such account as in Christianity. He is here the object of God's providential care, capable of communion with him and in virtue of that communion a participator in his immortality; and this high estimate of the value of individual personality is directly connected with the doctrine that a real historical personage, unique as every historical personage

must be, is not merely *a* manifestation of God (as all in some degree may be said to be) but actually God made man 'in the fullness of time', through whom, as the 'head' of a 'mystical body', humanity can as a whole become the vehicle of a divine life. On the other hand, in this very 'taking of the manhood into God' the kind of idealism which regards the human spirit as in its full development one with the divine can find a sanction; and representatives of this type of thought are often ready to claim that it is the truly Christian philosophy rather than one which, however associated with ecclesiastical tradition and stamped with ecclesiastical authority, leaves men in the end as remote from God as its master Aristotle did, in days before the union of the divine and human natures in one person had been proclaimed by the Christian Church.

I have here chosen, in speaking of the debt of modern philosophy to the Christian religion, to ask for your special attention to what seems to me to be on the whole the most important part of that debt. I pass by many interesting instances of obligation on the part of modern thinkers to Christian ideas; such as the help rendered by the Christian doctrine of the Trinity or by the Christian doctrine of 'dying to live' to Hegel and others in their efforts to understand how reality can be one without ceasing to be many, many without ceasing to be one; or, again, how negation may be not merely the opposite of affirmation, but a necessary element therein. I will confine myself to the service rendered to modern philosophy by Christianity in respect of the problem of Personality and of the notion of the human spirit as the expression of the divine.

I have already pointed out that the raising of the problem of Personality in modern philosophy as it was not raised in ancient (which had, as I said, no word precisely equivalent to Personality in its vocabulary) is historically traceable to the religious interest of

Christianity in the individual soul and to the speculative interest of Christian theologians in the mystery of the Incarnation of God in the person of Jesus Christ. This same mystery suggested to modern thought a conception of the unity of the human spirit with the divine distinct from the analogous conceptions which may be found in the philosophy of classical antiquity and in that of the Far East.

Classical antiquity was familiar in its mythology with the thought of men raised to the company of the gods; and, especially in the doctrines of Orphism, with that of the human spirit as a god fallen into a lower sphere. These thoughts are echoed in philosophy; the latter by the Platonic doctrine of the soul recovering through its experiences in this life the knowledge of the world of eternal realities which it had once possessed and then forgotten; the former by the Stoic ideal of the sage, whose superiority to the changes and chances of this mortal life makes him equal to Zeus in everything but length of days.

In the Far East philosophy has given unity to an immense and various multitude of cults through the thought of an Eternal Self, the sole Reality, whereof all lesser objects of worship and veneration are but transient disguises, which an instructed piety may penetrate, and the fundamental identity wherewith of one's own self it is the goal of spiritual endeavour to discover.

The Christian doctrine is different from that of classical antiquity in that the divinity of the God-man is not conceived as something won by the humanity, but on the contrary the humanity is conceived as assumed by the divinity. Moreover, this assumption of humanity is not a fall but a condescension; nor is it a mere transitory episode, but an abiding expression of the divine nature through the medium of human and (after this fashion) of the human only. It is far from my present purpose to discuss the truth of this doctrine;

I only wish to point out that, when certain exponents of modern western idealism deny that there is any God except (in a phrase used by Croce) *Deus in nobis et nos*, they are echoing not the classical nor the Indian but the Christian conception of the union of the divine with the human; since they speak of a God not risen from below, nor fallen from above, but of the one spiritual Being, which is the ultimate reality and expresses in the spirit of man his whole true divine nature. The Christian indeed may with reason contend that this kind of idealism, in its suppression of the distinction of nature between God and man which is the basis of worship and again of that between the Mediator who is God's Son by nature and those who enjoy adoption through him, does not faithfully represent the facts of his own religious experience; but it none the less unquestionably presupposes that experience, and by so doing is distinguished from analogous theories which have a different religious experience as their background.

In my third and last lecture, which is to deal with the position of religion in contemporary thought, we shall find that to understand this position we shall do well constantly to bear in mind the historical dependence of modern philosophy as a whole upon Christianity, under the shadow of which it attained maturity, and the experience created or fostered by which afforded it some of its most urgent and interesting problems.

III

THE PROBLEM OF RELIGION IN CONTEMPORARY THOUGHT

THE position of Religion in the thought of to-day is in more than one respect markedly different from its position in the thought of many previous periods of human history. If we do but go back so brief a space in the long story of our race as a hundred and fifty years it would, I think, be true to say that it was then generally taken for granted that Religion was a normal feature of human life; that to profess no religion at all was something strange and abnormal; that differences of religion, even when the difference was not between two confessedly different religions, but between different forms of the same religion, were among the most important differences dividing nations from one another or, when two or more religions claimed adherents in the same nation, distracting the unity of that nation itself. No State was to be found which did not profess some form of religion, though it might occasionally tolerate others, or even recognize different forms in different parts of its territory. This universal recognition of Religion, this general assumption of its importance in human life, was far from carrying with it the consequence that the tenets of the creeds in possession were everywhere believed, still less that their practical precepts were commonly observed. But criticism of the tenets of an established creed was seldom carried to the extent of explicit denial; at the very least a deference to its authority, even if obviously ironical, was exacted by public opinion; and the obligation of its precepts, even when there was scarcely a pretence of genuine obedience, was not openly disavowed.

The situation to-day is very different. A majority of civilized States count religious impartiality or indifference among the fundamental principles of their constitution; and, where any traditional association with a particular form of religion is retained at all, it is almost invariably accompanied by the complete abandonment of any attempt to exclude dissenters from that form of religion from full participation in the rights of citizenship or from public activities of any kind which do not actually involve religious ceremonial. Disbelief of the religious creed of the majority of a man's fellow citizens, or even of any religious creed, is now, in many (if not in most) circles of society, too common to excite surprise or to incur obloquy; and it would usually be reckoned ill manners to assume any particular religious convictions in a neighbour who did not in some overt way make plain his adhesion to a religious body professing such convictions. Yet this great change in the position of Religion in social life does not by any means imply of necessity (as it might at first sight seem to do) that Religion itself is rapidly vanishing from among men. On the contrary it is at least arguable that the loss which it has suffered by the defection of a host of merely nominal and customary adherents is balanced by gain in the sincerity and personal attachment of those whose allegiance, despite the absence of the old external pressure, it wins or retains.

The situation of Religion in the world of to-day—and especially that of the Christian religion, which, both on account of its intimate association with European culture, and also on account of the special obligation of the Riddell Lecturer to deal with its tenets and ethics, is the religion that chiefly concerns us at present—will be best understood if we glance for a few minutes at some features of its history in the period immediately preceding our own. If we cast our eyes back to the eighteenth century, we shall note two important facts.

The first of these facts is that it was at that time very generally assumed that the reasonableness of accepting and acting upon a religious creed could be made evident to any man of competent intelligence quite apart from his possession of any specifically religious experience of his own. Proofs of the existence of God were alleged which were represented as establishing that truth on metaphysical or scientific grounds, either as being presupposed in the constitution of our minds or as an inevitable inference from observed phenomena. The advocates of the special claims of Christianity similarly addressed themselves to the task of showing that, on ordinary principles of historical evidence, it could be put beyond reasonable doubt that miracles had occurred which, by proving the person or persons who performed them to be invested with supernatural knowledge or power, made it only prudent to obey directions given by such persons under promise of reward for obedience and of punishment for disobedience.

The other fact about the presentation of Religion in the eighteenth century to which I desire to call attention is this. Three points were commonly taken for granted by champions and critics alike, whether of Religion in general or of Christianity in particular. (1) That the God whose existence was held to be demonstrable by the ' proofs ' to which I have referred was what is often called a *transcendent* God, a Being quite distinct from the world which he had created by an exercise of his will, and from our own souls which were part of this created world. (2) That Christianity stood or fell with the authority of the Scriptures, which claimed to be nothing less than a revelation, descending as it were from above, of the will and purpose of this transcendent God, and of whatever it behoved us to know in order to apprehend this will and purpose; and to be therefore, when rightly understood—there might of course be, and there were, differences about their correct inter-

pretation—entirely exempt from error. (3) That the ultimate sanction of Religion was in every case the eventual happiness or unhappiness of the individual in another life, to the importance of securing or avoiding which the preachers of religion must appeal as the obvious ground on which to recommend to their hearers a course of conduct which there were at any rate good grounds for thinking might be the only one calculated to produce so desirable a result.

I do not indeed suggest that no one in the eighteenth century would have disputed the adequacy of this way of putting the case for Religion; still less that, where its adequacy was not disputed, it stood alone, unsupported by arguments and persuasions of a very different kind, which were doubtless often more effective in determining men's acceptance of religion than was always realized either by those who used them or by those who were influenced by them. But still I do not think that I have misrepresented the general drift of eighteenth-century apologetics; and I want next to call attention to the revolutionary change which, when we look at the situation to-day, we shall find to have taken place in this respect.

In the first place the ' proofs of the existence of God ' which were so important a factor in the eighteenth-century defence of religion are now very largely discredited. The decisive step in this direction was taken by Kant, whose damaging criticism of them has been compared by the poet Heine to the destruction of the prestige of the old political régime by the violence of the contemporary French Revolution. It is no doubt true that Kant's assault upon these traditional arguments may itself be in several particulars effectively criticized; but I think that it would be generally admitted that, whatever of value (and I think myself that there is much of great value) may be contained in the thoughts which found expression in those arguments, it is vain to sup-

pose that, apart from some specifically religious experience in our hearer, we can, so to say, force religion upon a reluctant mind by means of such reasonings. It would be as idle to expect to do this as to expect to create by arguments of a quite general sort an appreciation of music or of poetry in a soul insusceptible of aesthetic emotion. Kant himself, we must here remember, did not rest content with his destructive criticism of the old ' rational theology '. By appealing to the inexpugnable sense of moral obligation, the existence of which would be, he held, unintelligible unless the ultimate nature of the universe were other than without it we could have suspected it to be, he opened a way to those who have since appealed in support of the claims of Religion to elements in our consciousness of ourselves in relation to the world around us—such as the sense of *reverence*—which we may subsequently discover to underlie even the activity of scientific investigation, which ever presupposes what it can never prove, namely the ultimate rationality of the universe which it sets itself to explore.

Within the limits of this lecture it is plainly impossible to do more than indicate the nature of the change in apologetic method inaugurated by Kant. I must leave it to those who may be interested to verify what I am compelled to state dogmatically by reference to the literature which will be found to establish it.

The new defence of Religion which arose in the nineteenth century, and of which the German philosopher and theologian Schleiermacher is perhaps the most celebrated pioneer, did not aim at *compelling* men to admit the existence of a God quite apart from any direct consciousness of standing already in the presence of an Object of religious awe and reverence; but rather at calling upon them to recognize such a consciousness in themselves where they had neglected to attend to it and had therefore failed to cultivate and develop it. Now

the God who was thus to be *found* within the soul rather than *inferred* from phenomena (whether internal or external) as their ultimate ground or cause, is obviously, in the first place at any rate, an *immanent* rather than a *transcendent* God. And the tendency here exemplified to emphasize rather divine *immanence* than divine *transcendence* was promoted by that profoundly important feature of the spiritual history of the nineteenth century, the rise of the idea of *development* or *evolution* to be the ruling idea in all sciences which deal with living beings—whether we hold its extension beyond this sphere by such speculative thinkers as Herbert Spencer to be justifiable or no. It is at any rate manifest that the idea of *evolution*, as the best description of the way in which the world has come to be what we find it, goes along with the conception of an *immanent* God just as the idea of *creation* went along with that of a *transcendent* God. I am not for one moment wishing to suggest that the conception of a God immanent in the process of evolution—biological, social, cultural, religious—is without its difficulties; for it is at least no less hard to reconcile with a belief in God's goodness, and perhaps even more difficult to reconcile with a belief in God's wisdom, than was the view that God had created all at once in its main features the universe as it now is. But I am not at present concerned to discuss these difficulties, but only to draw as it were a picture of the religious situation out of which that of to-day has arisen. There is no doubt that during the nineteenth century the thought of a transcendent God was tending to give way to that of an immanent God, and that this was due both to the abandonment of the old view that the existence of God as the Object of the religious sentiment could be proved on grounds which ignored that sentiment altogether; and also to the discovery that the living portion of the universe at any rate was and, so far as our knowledge could extend, always had been

passing through a series of continuous changes analogous to those with which men had always been familiar in the growth of individual organisms from a germinal to a mature state and in the continuity of this process itself with a like process in the parent organisms which had produced the germs and in those which afterwards arose from the germs to be produced in their turn by the organisms themselves on attaining maturity.

The application of the idea of evolution to the social and cultural life of humanity had much to do with the creation in the nineteenth century of a new *historical sense*. Although, as I said in my first lecture, there are important differences between what we commonly call *Science*, which concerns itself with the general law, and *History*, which deals with the uniquely individual, yet, as I said, History avails itself of generalization as a means toward arriving at a knowledge of the individual. So the new attention to biological evolution encouraged the recognition that in order to write the history of a nation, of some art or science, or of philosophy, was not merely to chronicle kings and battles, give lists of masters, enumerate opinions and theories, but to show how in each case the state of the nation, art, science, philosophy which we find existing at a particular time requires for its proper understanding that we should see its relation to what went before, and how it could be said to grow out of its predecessor by a gradual and continuous process, like that by which the flower gives place to the fruit. This recognition was not always, I may add in passing, the *consequence* of the interest in biological evolution; for the observation of social and cultural evolution may be said to have preceded, if not all study of biological, at any rate the immense impetus given to that study by Darwin's suggestion of Natural Selection as a *vera causa* for the long suspected connexion of dissimilar species through descent from a common ancestor. The work of Hegel

and that of Comte were accomplished before the publication of *The Origin of Species*; and it is noteworthy that it was with social phenomena that Herbert Spencer's earliest evolutionary studies were concerned.

Now the rise of an historical method employing the conception of development as its instrument had, as one might have expected, far-reaching effects on the study and criticism of ancient literature; and these were nowhere more far-reaching than where such study and criticism was bound profoundly to affect the religion of Europe; namely, in its application to the books included in the Christian Bible. How complete and decisive a revolution has thus been accomplished is even now, I venture to think, only very imperfectly appreciated. Unmarked as it has been by spectacular changes in the outward forms of worship or in the constitutions of churches, it is difficult to realize that it probably involves a greater and more momentous break with tradition than the Reformation of the sixteenth century. It has affected or is certain to affect the whole of Christendom. Neither the refusal of the authorities of the most numerous of Christian communions, the Roman Catholic Church, to allow it to lead to the modification of its formulas, nor their discouragement of the explicit denial by theologians of traditional beliefs as to the authorship of the sacred writings, will by close observers be considered to justify the claim that the movement of which I am now speaking has with the condemnation of 'Modernism' ceased to operate within its borders. It is obviously impossible here to do more than hint at the nature of the change which within my lifetime has passed over the Christian Churches in regard to the nature of the authority of Scripture. I may be allowed to state very briefly in what I take this change to consist; but it must be realized that so to state it must be to omit much in the way of explanation and qualification which in a fuller treatment one would have to add.

I should then say that it is now widely recognized, and probably nowhere better than among professed students of theology trained under those who during the last half-century have devoted their lives to the study of Scripture, that the fact of some statement being included in the Bible does not guarantee its truth or even its religious value, nor does anything, which we otherwise judge to be true or right, lack something which is needful to make it a fit object of belief or rule of practice until a Scriptural sanction can be found for it. Again, I think it would be allowed by most instructed theologians that Scripture has no authority to override in matters of science or history evidence which would be taken in the case of any other ancient writing to contravene its statements; and that the authority in matters moral, spiritual, and religious which any Biblical statement may be rightly held to possess, it derives from the agreement of what it says with our moral, spiritual, and religious intuitions (for the accuracy of which, however, we have largely to thank the education which through the Bible we have all received from the great prophets and teachers whose words it has transmitted to us) and not from the fact of the presence of the statement in question within the covers of the Bible.

No wise man who is conversant with the Bible, and has come to recognize the unequalled value, moral, spiritual, and religious, of its general teaching will dismiss cavalierly anything which he finds bound up with that teaching, merely because he does not at once perceive its value or its relevance. One does not behave thus with what we read in Shakespeare or hear in Beethoven. We think it more likely that the former is good poetry and the latter good music, though we do not ourselves at first appreciate its goodness, than that Shakespeare was writing or Beethoven composing poor stuff. And yet we cannot exclude the possibility that

there may be things in a play of Shakespeare or a composition attributed to Beethoven which are really not good; the work of the master in an uninspired moment, or perhaps not the master's work at all, though incorporated with it. We must allow the same possibility *mutatis mutandis* about the Bible; where, moreover, there is plainly a great deal of matter historically associated with the prophetic and evangelic teaching, the preservation and study of which may sometimes be needful to the proper understanding of that teaching; yet which is not itself in any sense inspired at all. And as the wise man, while recognizing that not everything in the Bible is inspired, will yet not be too hasty in assuming that something in it is not so, merely because he does not at once feel that it is; so on the other hand, when he has to do with some view or practice which, while (not being something quite beyond the range of the Scriptural writer) it might have found a sanction in the Bible, is not authorized by any teaching therein contained, he will readily entertain the possibility of it being really discordant with the general view of life expressed therein, and which he has (we may suppose) accepted as the right one, and will rightly hesitate to adopt it, until he has genuinely so convinced himself of its truth or rightness that he is as sure of it as he is of the general rightness of the Scriptural view of life itself. But again *in principle* we cannot affirm that all which is true or right is in Scripture any more than that all which is in Scripture is true and right. It must always be remembered (though it often has not been) that there is singularly little in Scripture itself about that absolute authority which has from a very early date been generally attributed to Scripture in the Christian Church, and that the abandonment of its claim thereto, great as is the breach with tradition which it involves, contradicts no express teaching of the Founder of Christianity; while certain of his own recorded utterances in refer-

ence to the Old Testament harmonize very well with a freer and more critical attitude towards the sacred books than is adopted by what it has lately become the fashion to call Fundamentalism.

The third point which I mentioned as distinguishing the normal attitude of eighteenth-century thought in respect of Religion from that of a later day is the assumption that the salvation of the individual in a future life is the chief end of Religion, the sanction of its commands, and the ground of missionary appeal to the unconverted. The change in sentiment in this respect which is so marked in the language of the contemporary pulpit, as compared with that of the preachers of a day much less remote than a hundred years ago, is closely connected with another movement of thought whereof I am now to speak; a movement whose beginnings go back to the Renaissance, but which has only attained to its full influence over men's thoughts within a quite recent period. I refer to the disappearance of the traditional Christian 'otherworldliness' (as it has been called), for which secular civilization could never be the serious preoccupation of a Christian who had realized the transiency of the whole order of things to which it belonged and which might at any moment be blotted out in mid course by the sudden arrival of the Day of Judgement. Material comfort and enjoyment, invention, art, science might be the innocent diversions of man during his earthly pilgrimage, they might even be instrumental in winning men to religion, in illustrating divine revelation, in cultivating capacities which were eventually to be put to higher uses. But the more a man was truly religious, the less importance could they have for him. This general view was shared by Protestantism with Catholicism; though these two versions of Christianity did not always agree as to the particular gifts of civilization which were least unworthy of cultivation, nor as to the special forms of

self-denial in respect of them which were most religiously profitable.

The beginnings of a movement of reaction against this view go back, as I have said, to the Renaissance. But at first the new estimate—or return to an old Hellenic estimate—of civilization as good in itself did not impugn the Christian estimate of it, or, when it did, it frankly parted company with Christianity and appeared as neo-paganism. In civilized Europe generally a certain *double-mindedness* became characteristic of men's outlook. They pursued art and science and the other gifts of civilization with ardour while they still looked upon religion as something *super*natural, belonging to another world than this, so that the truly religious man must be, in proportion to his religiousness, a stranger in *this* world, to whom its affairs would be no longer a matter of serious concern, except so far as they might expedite or hinder his interests elsewhere. Now what is called the Romantic Movement, inspired in its chief home, Germany, by the poetry of Goethe and the philosophy of Kant's idealistic successors—and in other lands by other poets and thinkers—proposed to remove this 'double-mindedness' by seeking the religious values *within* instead of *without* this world and its civilization. This seeking of them there obviously harmonized with other tendencies of the age, which I have already mentioned, towards what may be called in a general way *immanentism*; and it entailed the shifting of the centre of gravity in religion from the prospects of the individual in a future life to his participation during the present life in an experience which could lift its possessor above the changes and chances of earthly existence into a consciousness of what might be called 'eternal life'; whether or no it were added that the enjoyment of it *now* was to be succeeded in time by a continued enjoyment of it by the same individual under other conditions. Even those

who regarded the promise of such a *future* enjoyment as involved in the *present* experience were increasingly disposed to avoid the reproach of an egotistical preoccupation with their own private salvation, and at the same time to decline the facing of difficulties arising from the increasing mass of evidence as to the interdependence of body and mind, by dwelling rather upon the possibility of entering on 'eternal life' here and now than upon an imaginative delineation of posthumous pleasures and pains such as had formed the stock-in-trade of many preachers at an earlier date. In a world where, with the increased provision by medical skill and mechanical ingenuity of means whereby pain might be lessened or abolished, sensitiveness to pain in oneself and reluctance to inflict it on others were becoming ever more widely diffused, the process was aided by a growing conviction that the old doctrine of the eternal punishment in hell of the majority or even of any portion of the human race was not easily reconcilable with the central Christian doctrine that God is love, despite the Scriptural texts which could undoubtedly be quoted in its support. Nor, when once faith in the inerrancy of Scripture was shattered on the one hand by the progress of astronomical, geological, biological knowledge with which the Hebrew legends of the origin of the earth and of man were plainly inconsistent, and on the other by the historical criticism of the sacred books, could the authority of any text carry its old weight against the testimony of conscience in this or any other matter.

The whole history of European religion in the nineteenth century, especially in the Protestant churches, illustrates the steady extension of *immanentism*, of the endeavour to find the religious values not without but within secular civilization, to see in Religion rather the soul of that civilization than something which transports the religious man outside of it altogether, and to

discourage therefore any asceticism which does not directly aim, like the athlete's rules of training, at greater efficiency in the service of society. Political creeds based on belief in progress as the law of human history were the national accompaniments of this *immanentist* temper; and the twentieth century seemed to be entering on the inheritance of the nineteenth in this respect when the immense catastrophe of the Great War shook this whole philosophy of life to its foundation and brought about a reaction, under the shadow of which we stand to-day.

This reaction, like all such reactions, does not aim at a mere reversal of what it found in possession, but on the contrary carries forward the work of the preceding age in certain respects, while in others it overturns it. It was, as we have already seen, one side of the process of nineteenth-century thought that it effected a change from a religion based upon external authority to one based upon personal experience; and here (despite some appearances to the contrary with which I will not for the moment trouble you) the tendency of to-day does not run counter to that of yesterday. Indeed in the realm of morals, where those who fifty years ago were reckoned the most advanced thinkers of the day were little disposed to question in any very important particular the accepted code of conduct—one, it is needless to say, for the most part of definitely Christian origin—to-day there is a general tendency to dispute all negative precepts (which are nicknamed *taboos* after certain customary prohibitions, found among Polynesian savages, which strike us as irrational superstitions); and to deny the right of any external authority to impose checks upon the free expression of the individual character, except in the name of kindness or mercy or loyalty to one's fellows; in which case it is for the sake of these good things, and not out of reverence for the imponent authority, that

they can be admitted. Whatever quarrel, however, Christianity may have with those who adopt these views in respect of certain rules of conduct, of which it cannot approve the infraction, it cannot but agree in principle with a doctrine which, however it may be misapplied in detail, echoes the great proclamation by which its Founder set the prohibitions of the Mosaic law below the twin commandments of love to God and love to our neighbour. But if there is no real tendency (despite, as I said, some appearances to the contrary) to fall back upon external authority, there is a strong tendency to deny that the religious values are to be sought *within* civilization, and to emphasize (as in Rudolf Otto's well-known book) even to exaggeration the element of *otherness*, *strangeness*, *irrationality* in Religion. This tendency, which was already beginning to raise its head (as in Otto himself) before the War, has since the War acquired great impetus from the failure of civilization to fulfil its promise of bringing about by a regular and constant development of its internal resources the revelation of the kingdom of God. In Germany Karl Barth (of whom I do not speak from a first-hand study of his writings) insists, I understand, in an uncompromising fashion upon the total discontinuity between the whole process of civilization and the Gospel of forgiveness and salvation. But everywhere there are signs of a widespread dissatisfaction with all the fruits that civilization can yield from its own store for the healing of the nations, of a demand for a religion which will bring men once more into the presence of One beyond and above the world which is subject to physical necessity, beyond and above also the life which aims at the mere gratification of natural desires, even though we include among these not only mere animal appetites but cravings which we reckon higher and of more dignity, and which what we call culture and civilization have been called into existence to satisfy.

It becomes us at such a time not to lose our heads but to ask ourselves what it is in the 'immanentism' of the last age that has led, under the impact of a great shock, to this sometimes intemperate reaction. We saw before that the activity which is proper to Religion, the activity of worship, involves a distinction between the worshipper and the worshipped which cannot be destroyed without the destruction of worship and so of Religion itself. At the same time it is unquestionably true that Religion itself is ever striving to transcend or overcome this distinction, as in that passion, which goes by the name of Mysticism, for a union with the ultimate Reality wherein all consciousness of separation from it shall be done away; a passion which is ever an element, not perhaps in the religion of every religious individual, but in every religious system which can hope to gather the religious of every sort into its fold. It is not to be overlooked that in Philosophy, too, there is an analogous paradox; a relation of knowledge wherein the Absolute, which by its very definition includes the philosopher himself, is nevertheless the object of the philosopher's knowledge. So for Religion the worshipper lives, moves, and has his being in the God whom he worships. When he prays, God's Spirit prays in him; and, according to the doctrine of Christianity, he recognizes that he can pray as a son to a father only because there is already in God's eternal nature a Sonship in which he can hope to participate.

It is the task of Religion in a new age, while securing the gains of the last century, the conviction of the autonomy of religious experience and the recognition of God's immanence in the world and in ourselves, the revelation of his presence in the civilization by which man masters the world and makes it his home, at the same time to rise above the faith expressed in a phrase of Turgenieff's which the late Mr. Bosanquet once said that he could accept (I am not sure that at the end of his

life he would have said so): ' I believe in civilization and I require no further creed.'

Religion is only itself when it is the worship of a living God at least as real as his worshipper, and so not lacking that concrete reality for himself which we are conscious as possessing in our own measure as *persons*. Such a God must transcend humanity even in its most highly organized form; but yet he is not ' wholly other ' than it, as though it fell altogether outside of his life. In the act of faith and worship it is taken up into that life and participates in the eternal intercourse of mutual love which, according to the religion in which European civilization grew up and wherewith it is beginning to admit that it cannot dispense, is the very essence of God.

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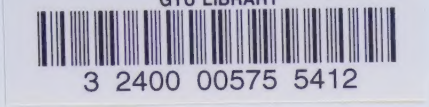
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